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BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THE RESISTANCE IN CAMBODIA  
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Mr. Chairman,

As you know, I am Carl Ford, the National Intelligence Officer for East Asia. My colleagues and I are here today at your request to present an intelligence briefing on the current situation in Cambodia. I will lead off with a few background comments and then Mr. Nat Bellocchi of INR, who will discuss the foreign policy component of the problem. He will be followed by Mr. Jay Sloan, the Defense Intelligence Officer, DIA, who will present a detailed account of the current military situation. After these presentations we will be happy to answer any questions you and other members of the subcommittee may have.

The Vietnamese began their current strategy of pursuing a military solution in Cambodia a year ago. Their first targets were resistance forces--primarily DK, but including KPNLF--who had established themselves at the western end of the Tonle Sap. They then successfully attacked DK logistics bases on the northern border with Thailand, and pressured KPNLF bases on the western border as the dry season ended. They stayed near the border through the rainy season, in contrast to previous years. This dry season they have attacked every resistance base in the border area. (S NF)

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The purpose of this strategy is to isolate the resistance forces and support infrastructure at the border, reduce infiltration, and denigrate the credibility of the CGDK. Hanoi is determined to remove Cambodia as an issue so it can move on to pressing domestic problems. (S NF)

There is a diplomatic component to the Vietnamese strategy, but it is secondary to the military. There is no significant evidence of Vietnamese willingness to compromise their goals in Cambodia or to slacken their pursuit of a military solution which would leave the political issues moot. There was a definite attempt to seduce Sihanouk, to which he might have been susceptible if not for Chinese and DK intervention. The attack on Ta Tum suggests the Vietnamese have abandoned that attempt, at least temporarily. (S NF)

In few cases has the resistance managed--or attempted--sustained resistance to Vietnamese assaults. Exceptions have been at Phnom Melai, in the DK-controlled southwest, and now at Ta Tum. In these cases also, the Vietnamese, as would be expected, have prevailed, albeit at considerable cost. The Vietnamese will face substantial difficulties in maintaining logistical support of its forces on the Thai border during the rainy season. (S NF)

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The test for the resistance will lie in how it takes advantage of Vietnamese vulnerabilities and implements the guerrilla strategy over the next six to nine months. So far, despite public claims to the contrary, there is little evidence of a general upsurge in the frequency or size of resistance-initiated incidents in the interior. Presumably the DK, drawing on supply caches already in the interior, will be able to increase their activity during the rainy season, but their ability to sustain a logistical link to the Thai border makes the durability of such an increase problematical. The issue is even more problematical for the non-Communists, who lack not only the DK's physical infrastructure inside Cambodia, but have problems of leadership, cohesion, and discipline. (S NF)

At this point it does not appear that the non-Communist resistance has a serious materiel problem.

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Although the non-Communist

resistance probably could recruit, train, and equip additional forces if they had more equipment, the binding constraint to increasing overall military effectiveness would remain leadership, which the KPNLF and ANS must provide themselves. (S NF)

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Likewise, with additional equipment the non-Communists probably could also increase somewhat the degree of support they receive from the population in the interior of Cambodia. There are significant obstacles, however. The Vietnamese security apparatus is apparently efficient--if indiscriminate--in dealing with subversion. Also, many Cambodians, notwithstanding animosity toward the Vietnamese, are probably tired of fighting and turmoil. None of the resistance factions have done anywhere near the organizational and political preparation that it has taken the NPA fifteen years to accomplish in the Philippines against a military adversary much less capable than the Vietnamese. (S NF)

ASEAN appeals for US support have less to do with the resistance or Cambodia per se than with a desire to see tangible evidence that the US is prepared to play an active role in the region and that the strategic field is not left to the Chinese and Soviets. The ASEAN Foreign Minister's Communique of February is interpreted by Indonesia and Malaysia in symbolic terms, i.e., that the US need not provide material assistance, but additional unspecified political support.

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